



San Diego City Attorney **CASEY GWINN**

NEWS RELEASE

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LOGAN HEIGHTS PROPERTY OWNERS RENTED STORAGE UNITS AS LIVING SPACES

*City Attorney's Office Settles Case;
Landlords Agree to Pay Fines for Substandard Housing*

San Diego, CA: Storage units were converted into illegal and inhabitable living spaces. What was once a fire station was also subdivided into illegal housing units. These illegal units in Logan Heights were rented out to tenants for \$250-650 a month. The City Attorney's Code Enforcement Unit in the Criminal Division recently settled the case. The owners of these properties on Kearny Avenue will pay more than \$22,000 in costs and penalties.

"This case illustrates how important it is that all San Diegans are afforded with acceptable living conditions," said City Attorney Casey Gwinn. "It reinforces the City of San Diego's commitment in eradicating substandard housing within our City."

According to Deputy City Attorney Johanna Canlas, the tenants, most of them low-income, rented and lived in these "cubbies" without the required minimum amount of light and ventilation. Extension cords were used in lieu of permanent wiring. It was a maze of blocked emergency exits and pervasive unpermitted plumbing, mechanical, electrical and structural work that overwhelmed even the experienced building and code inspectors. Tenants shared a communal bathroom and kitchen. The substandard housing units were located in two separate buildings: 2 storage units were converted into living spaces at 2274 Kearny Avenue, and 3 storage units and 1 unpermitted loft at the old fire house at 2284 Kearny Avenue.

The City Attorney's Code Enforcement Unit reached a settlement with Lisa Stratton and Mark Glenn, the owners of 2872-84 Kearney Avenue. The City Attorney filed a civil complaint alleging violations of the San Diego Municipal Code and unfair business practice under the California Business and Professions Code. The case was investigated by the City of San Diego's Neighborhood Code Compliance Department and referred

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to the City Attorney's Office in late February 2004.

As part of the settlement, the owners agreed to pay \$10,000 in civil penalties; \$5,346.15 in investigative costs; and \$7,000 in donations to non-profit charitable organization(s) serving the local homeless population. The owners are also enjoined from violating all applicable health and safety ordinances and building codes at all their properties. In addition, should the owners fail to comply with the terms of the stipulation as agreed upon by the parties, an additional \$43,000 in civil penalties may be imposed.

As a result of the City Attorney's Office's involvement, the renovation and rehabilitation of the properties are well underway. All the tenants have been relocated and the San Diego Police Department's Homeless Outreach Team was instrumental in relocating a tenant with special needs.

For more information about the City Attorney's Code Compliance Unit, visit our Web site at www.sandiegocityattorney.org and click "Neighborhood Solutions."

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